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**Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.**

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

### Office Action Summary

**Application No.**

10/624,445

**Applicant(s)**

COX, ALAN

**Examiner**

ASHOK B. PATEL

**Art Unit**

2456

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --  
**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 29 September 2008.  
2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.  
3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-30 is/are pending in the application.  
4a) Of the above claim(s) 1, 4-7 and 9-17 is/are withdrawn from consideration.  
5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.  
6) ☒ Claim(s) 2, 3, 6, and 18-30 is/are rejected.  
7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.  
8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.  
10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).  
11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).  
a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:  
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.  
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.  
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)  
2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)  
3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB-08)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_  
4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)  
Paper No(s)/Mail Date \_\_\_\_\_  
5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application  
6) ☐ Other: \_\_\_\_\_

### DETAILED ACTION

1. Claims 1-30 are subject to examination. Claims 1, 4-7 and 9-17 have been cancelled.

### *Response to Arguments*

2. Applicant's response and arguments presented below for the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph are persuasive for the reasons stated under the Examiner's response.

### Applicant's arguments:

### Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §112

Regarding the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, the Applicant maintains that characterizing the "notifying" limitation as "nothing but" the selected disclosure of paragraphs [0028] and [0044] is improper. While the cited paragraphs (as well as paragraphs [0032], [0050], among others, and Figures 2A and 3A) provide support for the "notifying" limitation in the context of synchronization, the specification provides support for a broader interpretation of "notifying."

One skilled in the art would recognize in the disclosure that in the case of multiple approvers, one approver receives notification of another approver's action that changes the status of an electronic mail message. For example, paragraph [0031] discloses that, "[i]f the second approver approved the message, it would remain in the first approver's unapproved folder, optionally with an indicator that the message had been approved by the other approver." (emphasis added). One skilled in the art would

recognize that this "indicator" could be conveyed in a number of ways, only one of which is through synchronization.

The M.P.E.P. provides examples of inadequate disclosure. For example, at M.P.E.P. 2163 (I) (B):

In *Gentry Gallery*, the "court's determination that the patent disclosure did not support a broad meaning for the disputed claim terms was premised on clear statements in the written description that described the location of a claim element - the 'control means' - as 'the only possible location' and that variations were 'outside the stated purpose of the invention.' *Gentry Gallery*, 134 F.3d at 1479, 45 USPQ2d at 1503. *Gentry Gallery*, then, considers the situation where the patent's disclosure makes crystal clear that a particular (i.e., narrow) understanding of a claim term is an 'essential element of [the inventor's] invention.'"

Nothing in the specification implies that synchronization is an essential element regarding notification. Nothing in the specification explicitly precludes other forms of notifying. In fact, paragraph [0006] (near the end) describes general notification of approvers relating to the electronic mail messages. Here, notification of approvers is described in the context of, "... one or more of the approvers can be notified automatically if a new message is received or has not been reviewed after a particular period of time." (emphasis added). Further, paragraph [0025] describes a child receiving notice when messages are rejected. The specification therefore clearly describes notification of electronic message status in forms other than through synchronization.

At paragraph [0006], the specification discloses that, "[m]ultiple people can have approval authority, and the actions taken by each approver can be synchronized." (emphasis added). Synchronization is therefore not required - this argument is further supported at the end of paragraph [0028], "[i]t should be understood that the current invention is not limited to situations in which some form of synchronization is used or required."

**Rejections under 35 U.S.C. §103(a)**

Bulfer, at paragraph [0022], teaches that, "[a] parent inbox 122 stores messages for the parent client 102b and an EPC or approval inbox 124 stores messages to be reviewed for approval. Approved messages are forwarded to the child account filter 110 for message processing and sender addition, as described below." (emphasis added). s the text above clearly states, the approval Inbox 124 of Bulfer merely holds messages for review, but does not contain approved messages. he messages in the approval inbox 124 may be approved or rejected. Once approved, the approved message is sent to the child account filter 110 for processing, but is NOT placed in an "approved folder" that would designate the message as approved. Thus, synchronizing the approval inbox 124 of Bulfer provides no information to the other approvers regarding the electronic messages, since those messages stored in the approval box have not yet been reviewed (see above, "to be reviewed").

At page 8 of the pending Final Office Action, the Examiner points to Figure 3 and paragraph [0025] of Bulfer as teaching "presenting a message in Approval folder" and the message being "approved or rejected by one approver." Figure 3, however,

provides an exemplary screen display for facilitating a parent in approving or rejecting messages. The "approve box 204c" described is NOT a folder for holding approved messages, but rather is a "check box" that a parent marks to indicate his/her approval of the message (i.e., "Checking the approve box 204c results in the message being forwarded to the child client inbox 112..."). The screen display depicted in Figure 3 is merely a input mechanism for the parent's uses, and is not conveyed to any other users of the Bulfer system.

The Examiner states at page 8 of the pending Final Office Action that, "... Bulfer teaches that the messages for approval be delivered to "approval folder", Fig. 2, element 124." As explained above, element 124 of Fig. 2 merely holds messages for approval, so element 124 contains no information regarding the actual approval/rejection decision.

**Examiner's response:**

**Considering the mutuality of the arguments** presented for the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph and the rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a), wherein the arguments are;

"[I]t should be understood that the current invention is not limited to situations in which some form of synchronization is used or required.",

"Nothing in the specification implies that synchronization is an essential element regarding notification. Nothing in the specification explicitly precludes other forms of notifying.",

"Further, paragraph [0025] describes a child receiving notice when messages are rejected. The specification therefore clearly describes notification of electronic message status in forms other than through synchronization.", and

"One skilled in the art would recognize that this "indicator" could be conveyed in a number of ways, only one of which is through synchronization.", further consideration was given for search for prior art accordingly, and, therefore, the finality of the last Office action is withdrawn.

Also, Applicant's arguments with respect to claim 18 have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC 103***

3. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

4. Claims 2, 3, 8, 18, 23-25 and 26 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lu (US 2002/0107950 A1) in view of Hickey et al. (hereinafter Hickey) (us 2002/0087646 A1)

**Referring to claim 18,**

Lu teaches a method for operating an electronic messaging system (Fig. 1a) comprising:

routing an electronic message intended for a first user (Fig. 1a, element 150) to at least two human approvers, wherein each of the at least two human approvers can approve or reject the electronic message prior to the electronic message being routed to the first user (Fig. 1a, element 160, page 2, para.[0021]; Furthermore, an electronic message may be directed to one or more supervisory recipients 160.");

presenting the electronic message to at least one of the approvers for approval or rejection (Abstract," A message screening system includes routing to a supervisory recipient an electronic message directed to an intended recipient. The supervisory recipient then is allowed to screen the electronic message by approving or rejecting the electronic message. The electronic message then is forwarded to the intended recipient if the electronic message is approved by the supervisory recipient.")

determining whether the electronic message is approved or rejected by applying a predetermined policy toward approval or rejection actions by the at least one of the approvers presented with the electronic message; routing the electronic message to the first user if the electronic message is approved (page 2, para.[0023], "The message screening system may be configured to automatically screen an electronic message. For example, lists of approved or blocked senders 110 may be stored at supervisory recipient 160, or otherwise, to enable automatic screening of predesignated message types or sender identifications. In one implementation, during the screening process, the sender 110 may be added to the lists of approved or blocked senders by the supervisory recipient 160. In another implementation, the MS server 140 may compare the electronic address of sender 110 to the list of approved or blocked senders 110 and,



based on the comparison, either forward the message, reject the message, or allow supervisory recipient 160 to screen this message of senders 110 personally, or otherwise. Approval may include a manual procedure performed by supervisory recipient 160 such as entering a command or pressing a key. Approval also may be a default condition that is presumed to exist after a certain time period of inaction by supervisory recipient 160 after receiving the electronic message. In general, MS server 140 generally forwards the electronic message to intended recipient 150.")

Although Lu clearly teaches at page 2, para.[0016], "For example, intended and supervisory recipients 150, 160 may include personal computer systems or other electronic devices such as a pager, a personal digital assistant, or a wireless telephone for communicating electronic messages.", and at page 2, para.[0022] "Supervisory recipient 160 may be provided with a viewing screen having one or more control panels that allow supervisory recipient to approve or reject the electronic message for receipt by intended recipient 150.",and [0023], "Approval may include a manual procedure performed by supervisory recipient 160 such as entering a command or pressing a key.", Lu fails to teach "once the electronic message is approved or rejected by one approver, notifying the at least one other approver of a changed status for the electronic message."

Hickey teaches at para. [0016], "[0016] In the present invention, a system and method is provided for multiple users to concurrently share one or more electronic communications. The electronic communications reside in electronic mailbox that is accessible by members of the group. When an authorized member of the group takes

an action with regard to the electronic communication, other members of the group can see what has been done. Thus, the members of the group can coordinate their activities with respect to the electronic communication."

Hickey also teaches at para. [0040], "Any member of the group 22A1 can define one or more alternate delivery instructions for the one or more inbound electronic communications 53A1. For example, each member of group 22A1 can specify a match criteria in a criteria template and then define in a notification specification rules to execute in when inbound electronic communications 53A1 satisfies the match criteria. The rules can prescribe, for example, an automated response or automated forwarding or directing one or more electronic communications from the received electronic communications 53A1 to a selected mailbox other than the default inbox 50A1 of the group electronic mailbox 25A1 assigned to group 22A1."

Hickey further goes on teaching at para. [0021], "The retrieved electronic communication is placed in the inbox of the group electronic mailbox and displayed through a client user interface. The group electronic mailbox includes in the user interface a status indicator for each of the received electronic mails. A change in status of a received electronic mail in response to one or more prior acts of a first group member performed on the received electronic mail is communicated to other group members when they view the status of the electronic mail. A set of tools is provided with the group electronic mailbox view to allow members of the group to selectively operate on the displayed electronic communication. The view of the group electronic mailbox includes for each received electronic communication in the mailbox a profile

including an associated status and one or more attributes derived from the received first electronic communication.”

Thus, Hickey teaches:

1) “a system and method is provided for multiple users to concurrently share one or more electronic communications”,

2) “each member of group can specify a match criteria in a criteria template and then define in a notification specification rules to execute in when inbound electronic communications satisfies the match criteria. The rules can prescribe, for example, an automated forwarding or directing one or more electronic communications from the received electronic communications to a selected mailbox other than the default inbox of the group electronic mailbox assigned to group.”, and

3) “A change in status of a received electronic mail in response to one or more prior acts of a first group member performed on the received electronic mail is communicated to other group members when they view the status of the electronic mail.” (once the electronic message is acted upon by a first group member, notifying the at least one other member of a changed status for the electronic message.)

The reasons why Hickey came up with this system and method is stated in para. [0007], “some group members may be deprived of information regarding the received e-mail message and the actions taken by the other group members in connection with the message. In addition, there is limited control on the flow, distribution and processing of the information intended to be shared among the members of group 22.”

Lu discloses a prior art, as stated above, upon which the claimed invention "once the electronic message is approved or rejected by one approver, notifying the at least one other approver of a changed status for the electronic message" can be seen as an "improvement". Hickey teaches a prior art comparable to Lu, wherein Hickey discloses "A change in status of a received electronic mail in response to one or more prior acts of a first group member performed on the received electronic mail is communicated to other group members when they view the status of the electronic mail." (once the electronic message is acted upon by a first group member, notifying the at least one other member of a changed status for the electronic message.) Thus, the manner of enhancing the system and method of Lu was made part of the ordinary capabilities of one skilled in the art based upon the teaching of such improvement in Hickey.

Accordingly, one of ordinary skill in the art would have been capable of applying this known "improvement" technique in the same manner to the system and method of Lu and the results would have been predictable to one of ordinary skill in the art, namely, one skilled in the art would have readily recognized that wherein the shared email communication deprives a sharing member of the information on the actions taken by the other member in connection with the changed status of the message, Hickey provides the technique showing that "once the electronic message is acted upon by a first group member, notifying the at least one other member of a changed status for the electronic message.

Thus, the claimed invention would have been obvious to include "once the electronic message is approved or rejected by one approver, notifying the at least one other approver of a changed status for the electronic message."

**Referring to claim 23,**

Lu teaches the method of claim 18, wherein the electronic message is routed to the first user upon by being routed to a folder, accessible by the first user from multiple devices at multiple locations. (para. [0016] and [0017])

**Referring to claim 24,**

Lu teaches the method of claim 18, wherein the electronic message is deleted upon rejection in accordance with the predetermined policy (para. [0021]).

**Referring to claim 25,**

Lu teaches the method of claim 18, wherein the electronic message is archived at a location that is inaccessible to the first user upon rejection in accordance with the predetermined policy (para. [0021]).

**Referring to claims 2 and 3,**

Lu teaches the method of claim 4418, further comprising applying a filter to the electronic message, such that the electronic message is approved if the electronic message passes the filter, and the method of claim 4418, further comprising applying filter to the electronic message, such that the electronic message is rejected if the electronic message passes the filter. (para.[0022]-[0024])

**Referring to claim 8,**

Lu teaches the method of claim 26, further comprising, if delivery of the electronic message to the intended recipient is approved, sending a notification to the first user.

(para. [0021])

**Referring to claim 26,**

Lu teaches a method for operating an electronic messaging system (Fig. 1a) comprising:

directing an electronic message to at least two human approvers, wherein each of the at least two human approvers can approve or reject the electronic message (page 2, para.[0021].” Furthermore, an electronic message may be directed to one or more supervisory recipients 160.”);

presenting the electronic message to at least one of the approvers for approval or rejection (Abstract,” A message screening system includes routing to a supervisory recipient an electronic message directed to an intended recipient. The supervisory recipient then is allowed to screen the electronic message by approving or rejecting the electronic message. The electronic message then is forwarded to the intended recipient if the electronic message is approved by the supervisory recipient.”)

determining whether the electronic message is approved or rejected by applying a predetermined policy toward approval or rejection actions by the at least one of the approvers presented with the electronic message; routing the electronic message to the first user if the electronic message is approved (page 2, para.[0023], “The message screening system may be configured to automatically screen an electronic message. For example, lists of approved or blocked senders 110 may be stored at supervisory

recipient 160, or otherwise, to enable automatic screening of predesignated message types or sender identifications. In one implementation, during the screening process, the sender 110 may be added to the lists of approved or blocked senders by the supervisory recipient 160. In another implementation, the MS server 140 may compare the electronic address of sender 110 to the list of approved or blocked senders 110 and, based on the comparison, either forward the message, reject the message, or allow supervisory recipient 160 to screen this message of senders 110 personally, or otherwise. Approval may include a manual procedure performed by supervisory recipient 160 such as entering a command or pressing a key. Approval also may be a default condition that is presumed to exist after a certain time period of inaction by supervisory recipient 160 after receiving the electronic message. In general, MS server 140 generally forwards the electronic message to intended recipient 150.)"and

Although Lu clearly teaches at page 2, para.[0016], "or example, intended and supervisory recipients 150, 160 may include personal computer systems or other electronic devices such as a pager, a personal digital assistant, or a wireless telephone for communicating electronic messages.", and at page 2, para.[0022] and [0023]," Approval may include a manual procedure performed by supervisory recipient 160 such as entering a command or pressing a key." Lu is silent in directing an outgoing electronic message having an intended recipient sent by a first user to at least two approvers prior to the electronic message being routed to the intended recipient " and "once the electronic message is approved or rejected by one approver, notifying the at least one other approver of a changed status for the electronic message."

Hickey teaches at para. [0016], "[0016] In the present invention, a system and method is provided for multiple users to concurrently share one or more electronic communications. The electronic communications reside in electronic mailbox that is accessible by members of the group. When an authorized member of the group takes an action with regard to the electronic communication, other members of the group can see what has been done. Thus, the members of the group can coordinate their activities with respect to the electronic communication."

Hickey also teaches at para. [0040], "Any member of the group 22A1 can define one or more alternate delivery instructions for the one or more inbound electronic communications 53A1. For example, each member of group 22A1 can specify a match criteria in a criteria template and then define in a notification specification rules to execute in when inbound electronic communications 53A1 satisfies the match criteria. The rules can prescribe, for example, an automated response or automated forwarding or directing one or more electronic communications from the received electronic communications 53A1 to a selected mailbox other than the default inbox 50A1 of the group electronic mailbox 25A1 assigned to group 22A1."

Hickey further goes on teaching at para. [0021], "The retrieved electronic communication is placed in the inbox of the group electronic mailbox and displayed through a client user interface. The group electronic mailbox includes in the user interface a status indicator for each of the received electronic mails. A change in status of a received electronic mail in response to one or more prior acts of a first group member performed on the received electronic mail is communicated to other group



members when they view the status of the electronic mail. A set of tools is provided with the group electronic mailbox view to allow members of the group to selectively operate on the displayed electronic communication. The view of the group electronic mailbox includes for each received electronic communication in the mailbox a profile including an associated status and one or more attributes derived from the received first electronic communication.”

Thus, Hickey teaches:

1) “a system and method is provided for multiple users to concurrently share one or more electronic communications”,

2) “each member of group can specify a match criteria in a criteria template and then define in a notification specification rules to execute in when inbound electronic communications satisfies the match criteria. The rules can prescribe, for example, an automated forwarding or directing one or more electronic communications from the received electronic communications to a selected mailbox other than the default inbox of the group electronic mailbox assigned to group.”, and

3) “A change in status of a received electronic mail in response to one or more prior acts of a first group member performed on the received electronic mail is communicated to other group members when they view the status of the electronic mail.” (once the electronic message is acted upon by a first group member, notifying the at least one other member of a changed status for the electronic message.)

The reasons why Hickey came up with this system and method is stated in para. [0007], “some group members may be deprived of information regarding the received e-

mail message and the actions taken by the other group members in connection with the message. In addition, there is limited control on the flow, distribution and processing of the information intended to be shared among the members of group 22."

Lu discloses a prior art, as stated above, upon which the claimed invention "once the electronic message is approved or rejected by one approver, notifying the at least one other approver of a changed status for the electronic message" can be seen as an "improvement". Hickey teaches a prior art comparable to Lu, wherein Hickey discloses "A change in status of a received electronic mail in response to one or more prior acts of a first group member performed on the received electronic mail is communicated to other group members when they view the status of the electronic mail." (once the electronic message is acted upon by a first group member, notifying the at least one other member of a changed status for the electronic message.) Thus, the manner of enhancing the system and method of Lu was made part of the ordinary capabilities of one skilled in the art based upon the teaching of such improvement in Hickey.

Accordingly, one of ordinary skill in the art would have been capable of applying this known "improvement" technique in the same manner to the system and method of Lu and the results would have been predictable to one of ordinary skill in the art, namely, one skilled in the art would have readily recognized that wherein the shared email communication deprives a sharing member of the information on the actions taken by the other member in connection with the changed status of the message, Hickey provides the technique showing that "once the electronic message is acted upon

by a first group member, notifying the at least one other member of a changed status for the electronic message.

Thus, the claimed invention would have been obvious to include for "outgoing message" as well and "once the electronic message is approved or rejected by one approver, notifying the at least one other approver of a changed status for the electronic message."

5. Claims 19-21 and 27-29 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lu (US 2002/0107950 A1) in view of Hickey et al. (hereinafter Hickey) (us 2002/0087646 A1) as applied to claims 18 and 26, and further in view of Bulfer at al. (hereinafter Bulfer) (US 2006/0036701 A1) .

**Referring to claims 19 and 20,**

Although Lu teaches (page 2, para.[0021]," Furthermore, an electronic message may be directed to one or more supervisory recipients 160.") (two approvers to approve or reject the electronic messages). Lu also teaches at para. [0006], "In some implementations, a supervisory recipient may be designated for an intended recipient. For example, the intended recipient may be a minor child and the supervisory recipient may be a guardian for the minor child. The intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have related accounts within an electronic mail service. Additionally, the intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unique screen names comprising a single Internet service provider account. Alternatively, the intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unrelated accounts.", Lu fails to teach the method of claim 18, wherein, in accordance with the predetermined policy, the

electronic message is approved or rejected when either one of the at least two approvers first approves or rejects the electronic message and wherein, once the electronic message is approved or rejected by either one of the at least two approvers, the other at least one approver will no longer be presented with the electronic message.

Bulfer teaches in Fig. 3 and at para.[0025], "The screen further includes a series of checkboxes 204, for example, for enabling processing of the EPC message. In an exemplary embodiment, the EPC screen display 200 include a delete message box 204a, an EPC box 204b, and an approve box 204c. By activating the delete box 204a, e.g., checking the box, the message will be deleted. Checking the approve box 204c results in the message being forwarded to the child client inbox 112 (FIG. 2), and checking the EPC box 204b results in the sender becoming an approved sender contained in the EPC list 114 (FIG. 2)." And also Bulfer teaches that the messages for approval be delivered to "Approval Folder", Fig. 2, element 124.

Additionally Bulfer teaches at para. [0008], While the invention is primarily shown and described in conjunction with Internet E-mail accounts for parents and children, it is understood that the invention is applicable to message systems in general, such as wireless messaging and voice mail systems, in which it is desired for a supervisory user to filter incoming messages for a supervised user." (in accordance with the predetermined policy, the electronic message is approved or rejected when either one of the at least two approvers first approves or rejects the electronic message and wherein, once the electronic message is approved or rejected by either one of the at

least two approvers, the other at least one approver will no longer be presented with the electronic message.)

Therefore, it would have been obvious for one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply "account for parents" and "presenting a message in Approval folder" of Bulfer to the teachings of Lu such that a screen display enables any one of the parents (account for parents) to bring up the "approval folder" by choosing the folder to open and approve messages and/or senders and then the processed messages are forwarded to the E-mail client so that approved messages can be accessed by the child and approved senders can be added to the control list.

**Referring to claim 21,**

Although Lu teaches (page 2, para.[0021]," Furthermore, an electronic message may be directed to one or more supervisory recipients 160.")(two approvers to approve or reject the electronic messages). Lu also teaches at para. [0006], "In some implementations, a supervisory recipient may be designated for an intended recipient. For example, the intended recipient may be a minor child and the supervisory recipient may be a guardian for the minor child. The intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have related accounts within an electronic mail service. Additionally, the intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unique screen names comprising a single Internet service provider account. Alternatively, the intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unrelated accounts.", and at page 2, para.[0022] and [0023]," Approval may include a manual procedure performed by supervisory recipient 160 such as entering a command or pressing a key." Lu fails to

teach method of claim 18, wherein, in accordance with the predetermined policy, the electronic message is approved when both of the at least two approvers approve the electronic message, and rejected when either one of the at least two approvers rejects the electronic message.

Bulfer teaches in Fig. 3 and at para.[0025], "The screen further includes a series of checkboxes 204, for example, for enabling processing of the EPC message. In an exemplary embodiment, the EPC screen display 200 include a delete message box 204a, an EPC box 204b, and an approve box 204c. By activating the delete box 204a, e.g., checking the box, the message will be deleted. Checking the approve box 204c results in the message being forwarded to the child client inbox 112 (FIG. 2), and checking the EPC box 204b results in the sender becoming an approved sender contained in the EPC list 114 (FIG. 2)." And also Bulfer teaches that the messages for approval be delivered to "Approval Folder", Fig. 2, element 124. Additionally Bulfer teaches at para. [0008], While the invention is primarily shown and described in conjunction with Internet E-mail accounts for parents and children, it is understood that the invention is applicable to message systems in general, such as wireless messaging and voice mail systems, in which it is desired for a supervisory user to filter incoming messages for a supervised user." (rejected when either one of the at least two approvers rejects the electronic message.)

Therefore, it would have been obvious for one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply the teaching of "approval folder" and "presenting a message in Approval folder" of Bulfer to the teachings of Lu such that a

screen display enables either both the parents or any one of the parents depending upon the set up of their email accounts, as suggested by Lu, to bring up the "approval folder" by choosing the folder to open and approve or reject messages and/or senders wherein message screening can be conducted by either both the parents or any one of the parents depending upon the set of their email accounts (wherein, in accordance with the predetermined policy, the electronic message is approved when both of the at least two approvers approve the electronic message, and rejected when either one of the at least two approvers rejects the electronic message) and then the processed messages are forwarded to the E-mail client so that approved messages can be accessed by the child and approved senders can be added to the control list.

**Referring to claims 27 and 28,**

Although Lu teaches (page 2, para.[0021]," Furthermore, an electronic message may be directed to one or more supervisory recipients 160.") (two approvers to approve or reject the electronic messages). Lu also teaches at para. [0006], "In some implementations, a supervisory recipient may be designated for an intended recipient. For example, the intended recipient may be a minor child and the supervisory recipient may be a guardian for the minor child. The intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have related accounts within an electronic mail service. Additionally, the intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unique screen names comprising a single Internet service provider account. Alternatively, the intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unrelated accounts.", Lu fails to teach the method of claim 26, wherein, in accordance with the predetermined policy, the

electronic message is approved or rejected when either one of the at least two approvers first approves or rejects the electronic message and wherein, once the electronic message is approved or rejected by either one of the at least two approvers, the other at least one approver will no longer be presented with the electronic message.

Bulfer teaches in Fig. 3 and at para.[0025], "The screen further includes a series of checkboxes 204, for example, for enabling processing of the EPC message. In an exemplary embodiment, the EPC screen display 200 include a delete message box 204a, an EPC box 204b, and an approve box 204c. By activating the delete box 204a, e.g., checking the box, the message will be deleted. Checking the approve box 204c results in the message being forwarded to the child client inbox 112 (FIG. 2), and checking the EPC box 204b results in the sender becoming an approved sender contained in the EPC list 114 (FIG. 2)." And also Bulfer teaches that the messages for approval be delivered to "Approval Folder", Fig. 2, element 124.

Additionally Bulfer teaches at para. [0008], While the invention is primarily shown and described in conjunction with Internet E-mail accounts for parents and children, it is understood that the invention is applicable to message systems in general, such as wireless messaging and voice mail systems, in which it is desired for a supervisory user to filter incoming messages for a supervised user." (in accordance with the predetermined policy, the electronic message is approved or rejected when either one of the at least two approvers first approves or rejects the electronic message and wherein, once the electronic message is approved or rejected by either one of the at



least two approvers, the other at least one approver will no longer be presented with the electronic message.)

Therefore, it would have been obvious for one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply "account for parents" and "presenting a message in Approval folder" of Bulfer to the teachings of Lu such that a screen display enables any one of the parents (account for parents) to bring up the "approval folder" by choosing the folder to open and approve messages and/or senders and then the processed messages are forwarded to the E-mail client so that approved messages can be accessed by the child and approved senders can be added to the control list.

**Referring to claim 29,**

Although Lu teaches (page 2, para.[0021]," Furthermore, an electronic message may be directed to one or more supervisory recipients 160.")(two approvers to approve or reject the electronic messages). Lu also teaches at para. [0006], "In some implementations, a supervisory recipient may be designated for an intended recipient. For example, the intended recipient may be a minor child and the supervisory recipient may be a guardian for the minor child. The intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have related accounts within an electronic mail service. Additionally, the intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unique screen names comprising a single Internet service provider account. Alternatively, the intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unrelated accounts.", and at page 2, para.[0022] and [0023]," Approval may include a manual procedure performed by supervisory recipient 160 such as entering a command or pressing a key." Lu fails to

teach method of claim 26, wherein, in accordance with the predetermined policy, the electronic message is approved when both of the at least two approvers approve it, and rejected when either one of the at least two approvers rejects the electronic message.

Bulfer teaches in Fig. 3 and at para. [0025],” The screen further includes a series of checkboxes 204, for example, for enabling processing of the EPC message. In an exemplary embodiment, the EPC screen display 200 include a delete message box 204a, an EPC box 204b, and an approve box 204c. By activating the delete box 204a, e.g., checking the box, the message will be deleted. Checking the approve box 204c results in the message being forwarded to the child client inbox 112 (FIG. 2), and checking the EPC box 204b results in the sender becoming an approved sender contained in the EPC list 114 (FIG. 2).” And also Bulfer teaches that the messages for approval be delivered to “Approval Folder”, Fig. 2, element 124. Additionally Bulfer teaches at para. [0008], While the invention is primarily shown and described in conjunction with Internet E-mail accounts for parents and children, it is understood that the invention is applicable to message systems in general, such as wireless messaging and voice mail systems, in which it is desired for a supervisory user to filter incoming messages for a supervised user.” (rejected when either one of the at least two approvers rejects the electronic message.)

Therefore, it would have been obvious for one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to apply the teaching of “approval folder” and “presenting a message in Approval folder” of Bulfer to the teachings of Lu such that a screen display enables either both the parents or any one of the parents depending

upon the set up of their email accounts, as suggested by Lu, to bring up the "approval folder" by choosing the folder to open and approve or reject messages and/or senders wherein message screening can be conducted by either both the parents or any one of the parents depending upon the set of their email accounts (wherein, in accordance with the predetermined policy, the electronic message is approved when both of the at least two approvers approve it, and rejected when either one of the at least two approvers rejects the electronic message) and then the processed messages are forwarded to the E-mail client so that approved messages can be accessed by the child and approved senders can be added to the control list.

6. Claims 22 and 30 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lu (US 2002/0107950 A1) in view of Hickey et al. (hereinafter Hickey) (us 2002/0087646 A1) as applied to claims 18 and 26, and further in view of Srivastava et al. (hereinafter Srivastava) (US 6,374,292 B1) .

**Referring to claim 22,**

Although Lu teaches (page 2, para. [0021]," Furthermore, an electronic message may be directed to one or more supervisory recipients 160.")(wherein the electronic message is routed to the at least two approvers). Lu also teaches at para. [0006], "In some implementations, a supervisory recipient may be designated for an intended recipient. For example, the intended recipient may be a minor child and the supervisory recipient may be a guardian for the minor child. The intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have related accounts within an electronic mail service. Additionally, the intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unique

screen names comprising a single Internet service provider account. Alternatively, the intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unrelated accounts.”, and at page 2, para. [0022] and [0023],” Approval may include a manual procedure performed by supervisory recipient 160 such as entering a command or pressing a key.” And accessible by the at least two approvers from multiple devices at multiple locations. (para. [0016]).

Lu fails to teach “message is being routed to a single folder.”

Srivastava teaches at Fig. 3, element 408 and at col. 4, line 52 - 65, “In the described embodiment, the message store 304 is organized as a set of folders and user mailboxes. The mailbox 401 is a container for messages where each user has an inbox 402 where new mail arrives, and can have one or more folders 404 where mail can be stored. Folders 404 may contain other folders or mailboxes and may be arranged in a hierarchical tree. Mailboxes owned by an individual user are private folders 406. In addition to a user owning a folder or a mailbox, a common user or group can share the ownership of a folder or mailbox as a shared folder 408. A shared folder is similar to an email group, but instead of messages going into each member of the email group’s inbox, messages addressed to the shared folder 408 go into a private folder associated with each user.” (“message is being routed to a single folder.”)

Lu discloses a prior art, as stated above, upon which the claimed invention “message is being routed to a single folder.” can be seen as an “improvement”. Srivastava teaches a prior art comparable to Lu, wherein Srivastava discloses “In addition to a user owning a folder or a mailbox, a common user or group can share the

ownership of a folder or mailbox as a shared folder 408.”(“message is being routed to a single folder.”) Thus, the manner of enhancing the system and method of Lu was made part of the ordinary capabilities of one skilled in the art based upon the teaching of such improvement in Srivastava.

Accordingly, one of ordinary skill in the art would have been capable of applying this known “improvement” technique in the same manner to the system and method of Lu and the results would have been predictable to one of ordinary skill in the art, namely, one skilled in the art would have readily recognized that wherein the shared email communication deprives a sharing member of the information on the actions taken by the other member in connection with the changed status of the message, Srivastava provides the technique of placing the message in the single folder that is “shared folder.”

**Referring to claim 30,**

Although Lu teaches (page 2, para. [0021],” Furthermore, an electronic message may be directed to one or more supervisory recipients 160.”)(wherein the electronic message is routed to the at least two approvers). Lu also teaches at para. [0006], “In some implementations, a supervisory recipient may be designated for an intended recipient. For example, the intended recipient may be a minor child and the supervisory recipient may be a guardian for the minor child. The intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have related accounts within an electronic mail service. Additionally, the intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unique screen names comprising a single Internet service provider account. Alternatively, the

intended recipient and the supervisory recipient may have unrelated accounts.”, and at page 2, para. [0022] and [0023],” Approval may include a manual procedure performed by supervisory recipient 160 such as entering a command or pressing a key.” And accessible by the at least two approvers from multiple devices at multiple locations. (para. [0016]).

Lu fails to teach “message is being routed to a single folder.

Srivastava teaches at Fig. 3, element 408 and at col. 4, line 52 - 65, “In the described embodiment, the message store 304 is organized as a set of folders and user mailboxes. The mailbox 401 is a container for messages where each user has an inbox 402 where new mail arrives, and can have one or more folders 404 where mail can be stored. Folders 404 may contain other folders or mailboxes and may be arranged in a hierarchical tree. Mailboxes owned by an individual user are private folders 406. In addition to a user owning a folder or a mailbox, a common user or group can share the ownership of a folder or mailbox as a shared folder 408. A shared folder is similar to an email group, but instead of messages going into each member of the email group’s inbox, messages addressed to the shared folder 408 go into a private folder associated with each user.” (“message is being routed to a single folder.”)

Lu discloses a prior art, as stated above, upon which the claimed invention “message is being routed to a single folder.” can be seen as an “improvement”. Srivastava teaches a prior art comparable to Lu, wherein Srivastava discloses “In addition to a user owning a folder or a mailbox, a common user or group can share the ownership of a folder or mailbox as a shared folder 408.”(“message is being routed to a

single folder." Thus, the manner of enhancing the system and method of Lu was made part of the ordinary capabilities of one skilled in the art based upon the teaching of such improvement in Srivastava.

Accordingly, one of ordinary skill in the art would have been capable of applying this known "improvement" technique in the same manner to the system and method of Lu and the results would have been predictable to one of ordinary skill in the art, namely, one skilled in the art would have readily recognized that wherein the shared email communication deprives a sharing member of the information on the actions taken by the other member in connection with the changed status of the message, Srivastava provides the technique of placing the message in the single folder that is "shared folder.

### ***Conclusion***

**Examiner's note:** Examiner has cited particular columns and line numbers in the references as applied to the claims above for the convenience of the applicant. Although the specified citations are representative of the teachings of the art and are applied to the specific limitations within the individual claim, other passages and figures may apply as well. It is respectfully requested from the applicant in preparing responses, to fully consider the references in entirety as potentially teaching all or part of the claimed invention, as well as the context of the passage as taught by the prior art or disclosed by the Examiner.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to ASHOK B. PATEL whose telephone number is (571)272-3972. The examiner can normally be reached on 6:30 am-4:30 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Bunjob Jaroenchonwanit can be reached on (571) 272-3913. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

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